

DMM Safety Alert:

Miner Struck By Rock

On April 25, 2013, a dimension stone saw operator with 21 weeks of experience was seriously injured when a 2-foot long rock fragment broke off of a large dimension stone block and struck his right foot. The saw operator and his lead-man were examining the stone block for imperfections and discussing sawing techniques to improve block quality. The rock fragment popped loose from the corner of the block without warning and the jagged end landed on top of the saw operator's right boot approximately two inches behind the boot's steel-toe. The injured miner was transported to a local hospital for evaluation, and underwent surgery to repair a severely fractured metatarsal bone in his right foot. He was released from the hospital the next day and is expected to return to light duty work in about two weeks. To prevent of this type of accident from occurring, the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

- Miner training should identify all possible hazards associated with working around large dimension stone blocks and appropriate ways to mitigate these hazards.
- It is important to be mindful of the stresses that can build up in dimension blocks as a result of cutting/sawing and handling. These stresses can cause pieces of rock to break off of the block without warning and where no sign of weakness is obvious.
- Ensure that persons who work around dimension stone blocks or other large blocks of material are equipped with the proper PPE. Steel toe boots with metatarsal guards may be appropriate.



Original location of the rock fragment that fell and struck the miner.

Jagged end of the rock fragment that landed on the miner's foot.